Case Studies as an Evaluation Strategy

Chapter 5

What Do You See?

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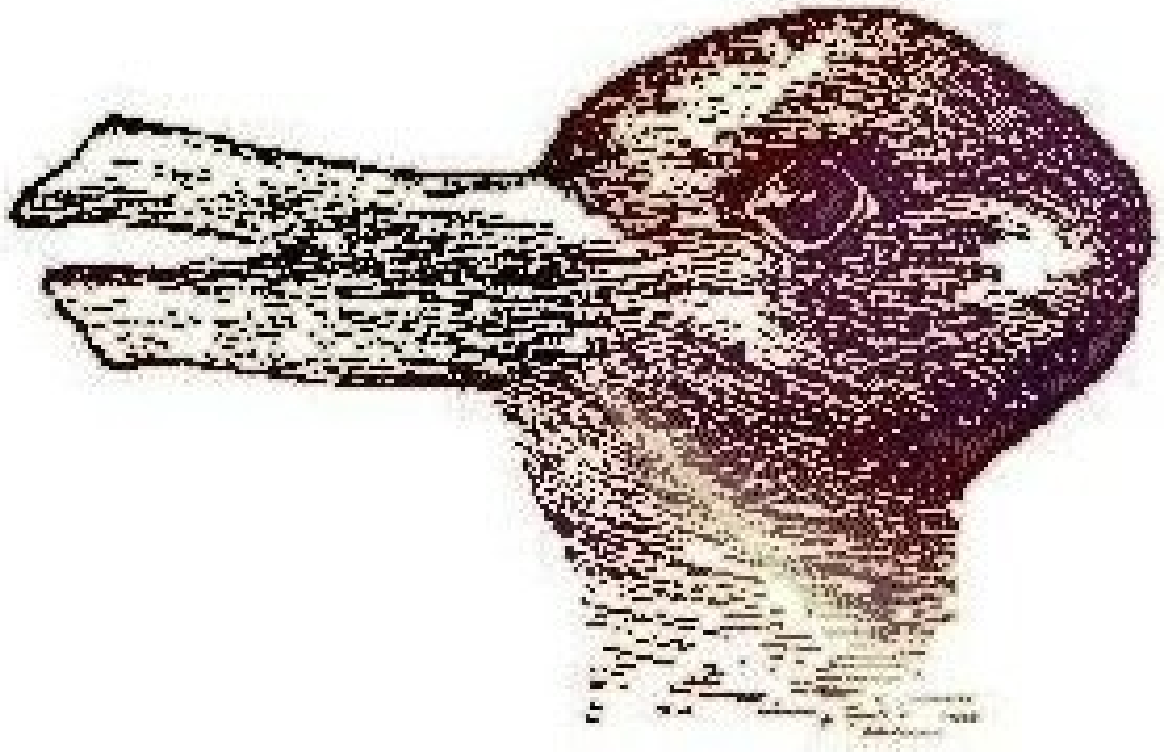

What Do You See?

What are Case Studies?

- Selection and observation of a single unique activity, organization or entity
- Formation of conclusions based on observation

What Do Case Studies Do?

- **Describe a process**
- **Provide insight**

Qualitative Methods for Quantitative Forecasts

- Expert Judgment
- Multiple Experts:
  - Panel Consensus
  - Delphi Method
- Grass-Roots Forecasting
- Market Research

Examples of What Can be Learned From Case Studies

- Influence of organizational climate
- Individual leadership characteristics

Example: Open-door policy

The Value

- **Important supplemental data to the overall evaluation**
- **Provides important insights into challenges faced by participating practices**
- **Documents benefits and shortfalls of the decision process that are difficult to quantify**

Example: Exit Interviews

Appropriate Settings for Case Studies

- Can be conducted at any time
- For insight into the entire program
- For detailed and extensive specific knowledge
- Exploratory in nature (do not begin with the end in mind)
- Initial information about a program – a good starting point

Limitations of Case Studies

- Lack of clear categories
- Selective perception
- Interactiveness
- Unnatural setting

Observations

- **Participant**
- **Non-participant**

Appropriate Data

- Observations of program activities
- Unstructured conversations with personnel
- Statistical summaries of program activities
- Structured/unstructured interviews

Appropriate Settings

- When a great deal of in-depth information about a program is needed
- At the beginning of a program
- When an exploration is required
- The first step in an experimental design

Unstructured Interviews

- Used in conjunction with observation
- Usually follows a checklist, or a contrived set of questions to be answered
- Spontaneity is essential, despite predetermined agenda

Application to Decision Making

- Relevance
- Adequacy
- Progress
- Efficiency
- Effectiveness, Impact, Stustainability

Case Study Techniques and Interpretation

Chapter 6

Observational Techniques

- Preserve exploratory quality
- Keep an objective eye and creative mind
- Conduct structured observations
  - Develop categorical schemes

Use of Existing Information Systems

Clinical Output
- Patient
- Primary Care
- Emergency
- Ambulatory
- Hospital
- Home Care
- Chronic Care

Financial & Logistic
- Input
- Insurance
- Cost Data
- Staffing
- Supplies

Continuous Improvement
- Quality Measures
- Epidemiologic Measures
- Productivity Measures
- Research Data

Content Analysis

- Studies available memoranda, documents and reports
- Describe trends in communication content
- Analyze styles and forms of persuasion used within a program context

Content Analysis

- What is said
  - Subject matter, direction, values methods traits authority, origin, target, location, conflict, endings, time
- How it is said

Nominal Group Techniques

- Involves a structured group meeting in which individuals are given a specific task/problem
- All group members are allowed to present their own thoughts on the problem
- Use of a moderator/facilitator

Advantages

- Identify and enrich the evaluator's understanding of a problem
- Helpful in identifying a set of hypotheses
- Focuses attention to areas of the problem that are amenable to evaluation
- Gives participants ownership

Delphi Technique

- Provides structure to case surveys
- Involves a series of questionnaires and feedback reports to a designated panel of respondents
- Usually associated with forecasting and larger surveys

Primary Objectives

- Determine, develop, or arrange a set of alternatives
- Explore underlying assumptions or information leasing to different judgements
- Educate the responding group about the diverse and interrelated aspects of the phenomena under study

Focus Groups

- Identify needs of special populations
- Target development of specialized programs for relevant subpopulations
- Generate relevant performance and outcomes measures for program evaluation
- Provide information to explain outcomes of newly developed services or products

Class Exercise

1. **Under what conditions would a case study be an inappropriate evaluation format?**

Case Study Take Home Points

1. Best if used to support a quantitative method, and not as a stand alone strategy
2. Extremely subjective, and therefore target for a wide range of interpretation
3. If conducted correctly, will provide an increased depth of insight to the inner workings of a program or organization

Questions/Comments ?